



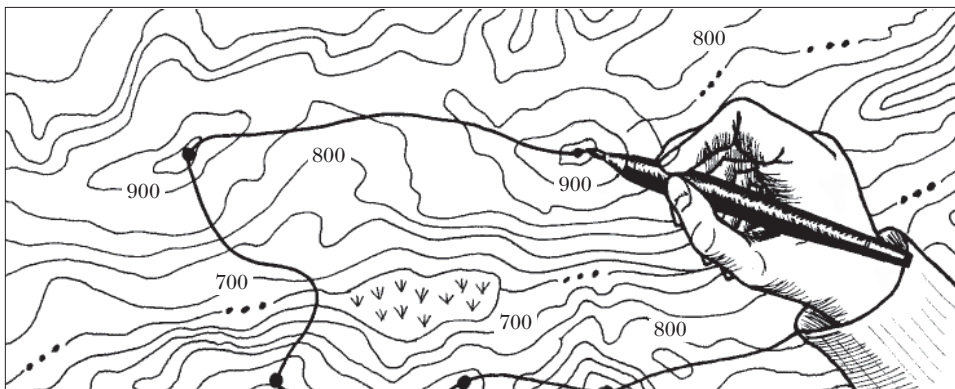
Activity: Where Are You in the Watershed?

TEACHER NOTES *and* INFO

This activity gives students a chance to become familiar with topographic maps and learn how to recognize wetlands, watersheds and other features on these maps. Students will be able to identify where they are in the watershed.

STUDENT ACTIVITY

1. Get a USGS topographic map of your area and have the students find locations of interest—their homes, the school, the roads they travel. Explain that a contour line joins all points of the same elevation (height above sea level), that some of the contour lines have numbers on them and this is the elevation in feet or meters, and that contour lines that are close together indicate a steep area. Find some hilltops and valleys.
2. Have the students find the wetlands in your area. Are they associated with rivers, streams, lakes or ponds. If not, why are the wetlands where they are? Where are the wetlands located (elevationally) relative to other features?
3. Choose one wetland area and mark all the highest points around the wetland with an X or a large dot. Connect the points with a line to delineate the wetland's watershed (see below). Discuss how any land use activity in the watershed can affect the wetland: soil, fertilizer, pesticides and other pollutants can wash downhill into the wetland with surface runoff.
4. Use the topographical map to try to “travel” by water to the lake. Locate the nearest tributary and figure out what route to take to the lake. Students should be able to delineate what sub-basin they are in by outlining the area from their home to the lake.



You will need:

- a topographic map for your region that shows the area from your town to the lake
- reproducible copies of topographic maps. National Wetland Inventory maps are available from the Vermont Wetlands Office. These maps are based on topographic maps and are in black and white so that you can reproduce them. Students can directly mark copies or use mylar with overhead markers.
- mylar (optional)
- overhead markers (optional)
- markers
- one large map of the basin would be helpful

Credit: Activity adapted with permission from *DISCOVER WETLANDS*, by Brian Lynn, Washington Department of Ecology, 1988.